

on the responsibility that we sought when we ran for public office and took on the privilege of representing the people who sent us here.

□ 1845

So I say thank you to Gabby for all she has done, and I challenge us to try to do a little bit of what Gabby would do if she were here to help us today.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, how much time do we have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Tennessee has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. COHEN. At this point, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. PERLMUTTER).

Mr. PERLMUTTER. I thank the gentleman from Tennessee, because I want to just talk about something Mr. WELCH said and also something Mr. COURTNEY said.

Mr. COURTNEY said that she had worked on some things involving technology with respect to the VA, and there were some technological problems with whatever it was she was getting. She was a curious, and is a curious, individual. She brought a curiosity about technology. She was one of the first adopters of the iPad as we began using it here. She just had become an expert in it long before any of the rest of us.

She also was strong enough that she worked in her dad's tire store. So here is a woman who brought that energy, brought that enthusiasm, brought that curiosity and brought a real service, a desire for service to this country. Despite terrible wounds, she continues that service today. If we could all do that this Nation would be unbelievable. It is our job to continue to try to provide that service and follow her example. Despite all the obstacles, here is a woman still changing the world. I am very glad to be able to speak for her in this moment today, 3 years after she was shot, but she is still making a difference.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the Members. There were others that would have been here but had certain conflicts at this time.

We all loved Gabby. She was the star of our class. It was before 3 years ago on the 8th of January that she was the star of our class. We all knew it, and we all loved her.

I want to thank each of our colleagues for joining us. I want to thank Gabby for her service and her continued service. She is an American hero.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 2279, REDUCING EXCESSIVE DEADLINE OBLIGATIONS ACT OF 2013; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3362, EXCHANGE INFORMATION DISCLOSURE ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3811, HEALTH EXCHANGE SECURITY AND TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2014

Mr. BURGESS, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 113-322) on the resolution (H. Res. 455) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 2279) to amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act relating to review of regulations under such act and to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 relating to financial responsibility for classes of facilities; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3362) to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to require transparency in the operation of American health benefit exchanges; and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3811) to require notification of individuals of breaches of personally identifiable information through exchanges under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BARLETTA) for 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on the topic of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. BARLETTA. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues in the House and I are here today to talk about another unintended consequence of the Affordable Care Act. We understand there is little appetite in this body to provide fixes to a flawed law. However, we believe that an unexpected and previously undetected problem with the law represents special and urgent circumstances.

This really took me by surprise. The fact that the Affordable Care Act could force volunteer fire companies to provide health insurance to their volunteers or pay a fine would burden them with unbearable costs and possibly cause them to reduce the number of volunteers they have or shut their doors altogether.

Simply put, this is a public safety issue. This is a problem today because

the Internal Revenue Service currently treats volunteer firefighters as employees for Federal tax purposes. Under the Affordable Care Act, if they have 50 or more employees and they work 30 hours a week, then the employers have to provide health insurance or pay a fine.

Here is a key point that I want to make. Some fire companies may hear about this and immediately think: well, we only have 25 volunteers so we are safe, we don't have 50. Well, that may not necessarily be the case. Some fire companies are considered part of their local government. That could mean that if you take the number of firefighters paid and unpaid now considered employees by the IRS and add them to the number of other public employees, such as highway workers, police, code enforcement officers, health officers, clerical workers, you can easily reach 50, even in a small town.

This would be a very big deal in my home State of Pennsylvania. Ninety-seven percent of our fire companies are either completely or mostly volunteers. Nationally, 91.7 percent of fire companies use at least some volunteers and 86.2 percent depend on all or mostly volunteers. Those numbers come from the 2012 National Fire Department Census conducted by the United States Fire Administration.

So I wrote a letter to the IRS, just like many of my colleagues here, and asked them for clarification. To this point, as of this afternoon, we have gotten no reply from the Internal Revenue Service. They have said that they are "reviewing" it.

This should be very easy to clear up for the IRS. Just say that volunteer firefighters are just that—volunteers. But we are still waiting.

Let's be clear about this. This wrinkle in the Affordable Care Act will not provide health care to the uninsured; it will only shut down fire companies and cause a severe threat to public safety.

That is why I have introduced H.R. 3685, the Protecting Volunteer Firefighters and Emergency Responders Act. The bill will specifically exempt volunteer firefighters and volunteers providing emergency medical services from the employer mandate provision of the Affordable Care Act.

I was happy to learn that there is a bipartisan Senate bill that is a companion to mine. I hope that we can see bipartisan support for this in both the House and in the Senate and that we can get through this quickly so that the President can sign it.

Mr. Speaker, this problem with the Affordable Care Act represents a clear and present danger to public safety.

I would like to invite my colleagues to offer their thoughts about this problem and how it relates to their own districts.

I would like to yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK).

Mr. FITZPATRICK. I thank my friend from Pennsylvania, Mr.